

## Message Text

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21

ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 SCA-01 VO-03

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FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1392

INFO USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 8818

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF

SUBJ: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES: BOAT CASES MV AVA

REF: A. LONDON 11697, B. STATE 183403

1. POLITICAL ADVISER INFORMED ME LATE LAST NIGHT OF SUBSTANCE  
REFTEL A AND THIS MORNING READ ME TEXTS OF HONG KONG'S  
ANSWERING CABLES. HKG ACCEPTS HUMANITARIAN ARGUMENT AND WILL  
PERMIT REFUGEES TO LAND ALTHOUGH NOT FOR A COUPLE OF DAYS.  
DELAY IS BASICALLY FOR PRACTICAL REASONS BUT ALSO  
BECAUSE THEY WISH TO GET ANSWERS TO TWO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS:

1) WILL UK ITSELF ALSO EXPRESS WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER  
TAKING SOME REFUGEES AS PART OF INTERNATIONAL EFFORT, AND  
2) CAN THE UNHCR BE INDUCED TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY  
FOR THE REFUGEES WHILE THEY ARE IN HONG KONG AS PART OF  
A GENERAL APPEAL TO ALL COUNTRIES OF THE REGION TO HARBOR  
REFUGEES UNDER ITS AEGIS. SPECIFICALLY FOR HK

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THE HNHCR IS BEING ASKED TO SEND ITS REPRESENTATIVE FROM

KUALA LUMPUR WHO WOULD WORK WITH VOLAGS HERE, SEVERAL OF WHICH ARE GEARED UP TO HELP.

2. THESE POINTS ARE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT FOR HKG AND WILL BE THE MEANS BY WHICH THEY ARE ABLE TO SLIDE OFF THE HOOK OF HAVING UP TO NOW REFUSED PERMISSION FOR REFUGEES TO LAND IN HONG KONG. FCO INSTRUCTIONS TO UK MISSION IN GENEVA ARE TO PRESS THEIR ARGUMENTS URGENTLY WITH THE UNHCR AND THEY WOULD LIKE OUR SUPPORT. I TOLD DONALD THAT WE CERTAINLY AGREED WITH THEIR APPROACH TO INTERNATIONALIZING THE PROBLEM AND THAT IN FACT OUR MISSION IN GENEVA HAD BEEN URGING THE SAME THINGS ON THE HIGH COMMISSIONER. I WAS SURE WE WOULD CONTINUE TO DO SO.

3. INSTRUCTIONS TO UK EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON WHICH DONALD ALSO READ TO ME ASKED FOR SOME SORT OF ASSURANCES THAT AMERICANS WILL TAKE ALL REFUGEES WHO CANNOT GAIN ENTRY INTO OTHER COUNTRIES. THIS REQUEST WOULD BE HINGED ON DEPARTMENT OFFICER'S STATEMENT THAT WE WOULD DO ALL WE COULD TO PROCESS REFUGEES AS FAST AS POSSIBLE (REF B). I WAS NONCOMMITTAL ON WHETHER WE COULD GIVE SUCH A GUARANTEE BUT I SAID THAT WE WOULD CERTAINLY DO OUR UTMOST TO CUT OUT BUREAUCRATIC DEALYS AND OTHER OBSTACLES STANDING IN THE WAY OF RAPID PROCESSING. FOR EXAMPLE, OUR PEOPLE WOULD BE GOING BACK ABOARD THE AVA FOR A SECOND TIME FOLLOWING THE FRENCH, CANADIANS AND GERMANS WHO VISITED YESTERDAY. (INEVITABLY, THERE MAY BE SOME CROSSED WIRES IN BRITISH INSTRUCTIONS, SO I SUGGEST DEPARTMENT WAIT FOR UK EMBASSY APPROACH AND NOT REVEAL PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF TESES INSTRUCTIONS.)

4. COMMENT: NOW THAT THE BRITISH HAVE COME AROUND, WE CAN EXPECT THE USUAL EFFICIENT AND HUMANE HANDLING OF THE REFUGEES. HOWEVER, IN ORDER TO KEEP UP THE MOMENTUM IN OUR EFFORTS TO INTERNATIONALIZE THE PROBLEM AND TO PROVIDE AN ENCOURAGING PRECEDENT FOR OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE AREA WE WILL HAVE TO MOVE QUICKLY TO DO OUR PART. WE WILL HAVE SOME SUGGESTIONS ON BOTH THE LOCAL AND REGIONAL ASPECTS SHORTLY.

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## Message Attributes

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